



Openness in Research Policy

I. Policy Statement

The Openness in Research Policy for Brown University is established in the context of the University's mission statement:

The mission of Brown University is to serve the community, the nation, and the world by discovering, communicating, and preserving knowledge and understanding in a spirit of free inquiry, and by educating and preparing students to discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation.

Brown University is committed to preserving and protecting the freedom of research and to maintaining a teaching and research environment that is open and that promotes the free exchange of research results. In accordance with this commitment, the following principles have been adopted:

- 1) Brown University will not undertake classified or secret research;
- 2) Brown University will not accept terms and conditions that allow modification to or approval of publications by an external sponsor;
- 3) Brown University will not accept publication restrictions, including unspecified publication delays or terms that prohibit or restrict dissemination;
- 4) Brown University will not permit an external sponsor to exercise technical direction of the work or require re-performance of the work until the sponsor views it as acceptable;
- 5) Foreign faculty, students, and scholars will not be singled out for restriction in access to Brown University's educational and research facilities and activities; and
- 6) Brown University will not enter into a contract or grant to carry out research if the contract or grant restrains the freedom of the University to disclose the:
 - Existence of the contract or grant; or
 - Identity of the sponsor or contracting entity; or

- Type of the research to be conducted; or
- Research results

II. Exceptions

In rare cases exceptions may be made to these principles. Such exceptions may be granted when:

- The sponsor has a legitimate interest in promoting training of domestic students or increasing domestic capacity in a certain sector;
- The pursuit of knowledge may involve critically important but sensitive areas of technology where the immediate distribution of research results would be inappropriate.

Such exceptions must be limited in scope to those circumstances where the area of research is central to Brown University's mission.

A. Confidentiality

If, in a program of research, an outside person or entity has made confidential information available to a Brown investigator, provisions may be made to preserve confidentiality. Protected health information, personally-identifying information or school records are all examples of the type of information that the University would agree to hold in confidence or remove from publications at the sponsor's request. Certain types of information related to pending patents and/or undisclosed business plans would also be held in confidence. In all cases, such confidential information would be 'background' information, not required for a research publication.

B. Publication Delays

A short delay in the publication of research results during which time the information provider may examine the proposed publication to ensure that the Brown investigator has not inadvertently disclosed the provider's confidential information is acceptable. The information provider must conduct its review expeditiously (within 90 days of receipt) and may not review the publication for the purpose of issuing approval for or otherwise altering its content. For delays longer than 90 days, such as in the case of multi-site clinical research where a publication committee received data from participating sites and makes decisions about joint publications, the period of delay is not to exceed 18 months from the completion of research at all research sites. Under exceptional circumstances, the Vice-President for Research may approve contractual arrangements that could lead to longer publication delays

C. Publication Restrictions

The right to freely publish the results of any research conducted at Brown University is central to Brown's mission as an academic research institution. Brown University will not accept research funding for a project if the sponsor requires the investigator to secure permission from the sponsor to publish research results, in whole or in part.

D. Students

Brown University does not generally permit involvement of students in projects that carry restrictions that may impede their progress toward a degree. Therefore, students should not be involved in research projects that require the delay of a student's publication of research results when such results are intended for use in obtaining academic credit. Under exceptional circumstances, the Vice President for Research, Dean of the Graduate School, and Dean of the local academic unit may jointly decide to approve agreements which contain well-justified delays or review and approval of student publications including master's thesis and doctoral dissertation

E. Citizenship Restrictions

In certain circumstances, the conduct of research may require that a member of a research group meet certain citizenship requirements to obtain or to have access to certain proprietary or U.S. Government-restricted information, where that information is subject to export controls under the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) or the Export Administration Regulations (EAR). Similarly, the conduct of fundamental research at Brown University may require use of items subject to the ITAR to which access is controlled or prohibited on the basis of citizenship. Acceptance of such citizenship restrictions must be reviewed and approved by the Office of the Vice-President for Research.

In international research, there may also be de facto limitations on citizenship imposed by foreign nations where citizens/nationals of certain countries cannot feasibly obtain a visa or work authorization, either due to citizenship limitations in the visa rules, or policies that allow only the hire of host-country employees. Such restrictions may also prohibit the participation of certain individuals in research and will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

III. Vice-President for Research Review and Approval

This policy does not attempt to anticipate all possible scenarios regarding restricted research. In some cases, decisions to accept restrictions that are inconsistent with the principles set forth in this policy will be made on a case-by-case basis. Such decisions will be made by the Office of the Vice-President for Research.

In choosing to accept or decline such projects, the Office of the Vice-President for Research will consider the potential of a project to generate and disseminate new knowledge in support of Brown University's mission and infrastructure requirements to accommodate the research. While this policy sets no explicit limits as to the extent of restricted research permitted at Brown University beyond prohibiting classified and secret research, it is not intended to encourage any school or department to engage in restricted research as an ongoing activity.

Policy Owner: The Office of the Vice-President for Research

Contact Person for Policy: Keri Godin, Director, Office of Research Integrity

Approved on: January 4, 2018

Last updated on: January 4, 2018